

and I were with this morning who got adopted because we used the power of the Federal Government to end the rules and the bureaucratic snarls that kept foster children from moving quickly into adopted homes.

This is really all about the American people, and it is a gift to be able to serve. And I believe it's a gift to be fortunate enough in this country to have resources to give. And I think we should walk out of this room, thanking our lucky stars that we could be here today, thanking God we got the chance to serve and test our ideas, and being absolutely determined that we are going to be of good cheer, of strong confidence, and we're going to make absolutely sure the American people know why we stand for what we stand for and exactly what we intend to do in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the York Room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John Merrigan, chair, Democratic Business Council; Mitchell Delk, vice chairman, Federal Home Mortgage Corp.; Mayor Jan Lavery Jones of Las Vegas; Beth E. Dozoretz, national finance chair, Frank Katz, national finance director, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, Democratic National Committee; Lou Weisbach, chief executive officer, HA-LO Industries, Inc.; and Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum.

### **Statement on Signing the Organ Donor Leave Act**

*September 24, 1999*

Today, I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 457, the "Organ Donor Leave Act," which would enhance the Federal Government's leadership role in encouraging organ donations by making it easier for Federal employees to become donors.

Currently, more than 65,000 Americans are awaiting an organ transplant. Last year, almost 5,000 Americans died while waiting for an organ to become available. This amounts to an average of 13 citizens each day. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if there were a sufficient supply of donor organs. H.R. 457 is a valuable tool to help address the needs of Americans wait-

ing for organs by encouraging donations by Federal employees.

In 1997, my Administration launched the National Organ and Tissue Donation Initiative, which included new efforts by the Federal Government to increase awareness among Federal employees of the need for organ and tissue donation. The Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management, has implemented a Government-wide campaign to encourage Federal employees to consider organ donation and, as the country's largest employer, to set the example for the private sector as well as other public organizations.

H.R. 457 builds on my Administration's long-standing commitment to increasing organ donations nationwide. Under current law, a Federal employee may use up to 7 days of paid leave each year, other than sick leave or annual leave, to serve as a donor. Recent surveys of doctors and hospitals indicate that the current 7-day limit is clearly insufficient for recovery from organ donation surgery. This bill increases the amount of paid leave available to Federal employees who donate organs for transplants, providing up to 30 days of paid leave, in addition to annual and sick leave, for organ donation.

In addition to our current efforts, my Administration will go forward in the coming weeks with the framework for an organ allocation system that will serve patients better. Our approach, which has been validated by the Institute of Medicine, calls for improved allocation policies to be designed by transplant professionals, not by the Government, and would ensure better and fairer treatment for patients. We need an organ allocation system that is as good as our transplant technology, and it is time for sound allocation policies to go into effect.

It gives me great pleasure to sign H.R. 457 into law. I welcome the opportunity to help Federal employees participate in this life-saving effort.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
September 24, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 457, approved September 24, was assigned Public Law No. 106-56.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **September 18**

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd, beginning on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

#### **September 19**

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

#### **September 20**

In the morning, the President traveled to Raleigh, NC, where he was briefed by Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., at the airport. In the afternoon, he traveled to Tarboro, NC, where he toured areas damaged by Hurricane Floyd. Later, the President returned to Washington, DC.

#### **September 21**

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, where he met separately with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti at the United Nations.

In the afternoon, the President met separately with Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina, President Andres Pastrana of Colombia, President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania, and President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela at the United Nations.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory A. Baer to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Markets at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ira Berlin and Evelyn Edson to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to appoint David Berger, Lanny A. Breuer, and Nan H. Rich to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint William C. Oldaker as a member of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint W. Robert Connor as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jeremy Bernard to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced the appointment of Alan Philip Larson as a member of the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd, beginning on September 14 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 15-17.

#### **September 22**

The White House announced that President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria will make an official working visit to Washington, DC, on October 28.